

AN ACT concerning courts.

WHEREAS, The State of Illinois is dedicated to the urgent task of strengthening and expediting the national defense under the emergent conditions which are threatening the peace and security of this nation;

WHEREAS, It is the considered judgment of the General Assembly that the citizens of Illinois who respond to their country's call to service are deserving of every benefit and protection; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that State government recognize the State's citizens who have made the ultimate sacrifice to protect the peace and security of this nation; and

WHEREAS, The Illinois Court of Claims should be equipped to provide for and assist the survivors of fallen service members by increasing accessibility to the Court of Claims and providing outreach services to the community, which will serve to educate survivors as to their benefits and protections under State law; and

WHEREAS, By recognizing these sacrifices, the State of Illinois encourages its citizens to participate to the fullest extent in the national defense program and thereby heightens the contribution of our State to the protection of our heritage

of liberty and democracy; therefore

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,  
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The Court of Claims Act is amended by adding Section 9.5 as follows:

(705 ILCS 505/9.5 new)

Sec. 9.5. Gold Star and Fallen Heroes Families Assistance Program.

(a) Within the Court of Claims, there is established a Gold Star and Fallen Heroes Families Assistance Program, which is charged with the responsibility of assessing the needs of and providing information to Illinois Gold Star Families with regard to claims filed pursuant to the Line of Duty Compensation Act.

(b) As used in this Section, "Gold Star Family" means the family members of an individual who was killed in the line of duty and who was employed or serving in a capacity defined in Section 2 of the Illinois Line of Duty Compensation Act.

(c) Toll-free helpline. The Gold Star and Fallen Heroes Families Assistance Program shall include a toll-free helpline dedicated to families seeking information about the Line of Duty Compensation Act, including, but not limited to, the status of claims filed pursuant to that Act. The helpline phone

number and information about the Gold Star and Fallen Heroes Families Assistance Program shall be provided to each person filing a claim under the Line of Duty Compensation Act.

(d) On or before January 1 of each year, the Court of Claims shall report to the Governor, both houses of the General Assembly, and the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs the following information:

(1) the number of claims filed with the Court of Claims pursuant to the Line of Duty Compensation Act ("LODCA");

(2) the number of LODCA claims approved for payment by the Court of Claims during the preceding calendar year;

(3) the number and status of LODCA claims pending in the Court of Claims; and

(4) other information as may be requested by the Governor.